

Message Text

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PAGE 01 CAPE T 00225 01 OF 02 151540Z
ACTION AF-08

INFO OCT-01 IO-13 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01 INR-07
L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06
DHA-02 /069 W
-----151626Z 049416 /45

R 151500Z FEB 77
FM AMEMBASSY CAPE TOWN
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5735
INFO AMCONSUL DURBAN
AMCONSUL JOHANNESBURG
AMEMBASSY PRETORIA
USMISSION USUN NEW YORK

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE SECTION 1 OF 2 CAPE TOWN 0225

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PINT PINS SEDU SF
SUBJ: CATHOLIC BISHOPS CONTINUE ATTACK SAG RACIAL POLICIES -
CHARGE POLICE BRUTALITY, TORTURE

REF: CAPE TOWN 0222

SUMMARY: IN ADDITION TO STATEMENT ON INTEGRATION OF CHURCH
SCHOOLS (REFTEL), SOUTH AFRICAN ROMAN CATHOLIC BISHOPS ALSO
ISSUED (1) STATEMENT ON CONSCIENTIOUS OBJECTORS,
(2) 21-POINT DECLARATION OF COMMITMENT TO COMBAT RACISM AND
ALLOW BLACKS MORE SAY IN CHURCH AFFAIRS AND (3) STATEMENT
ON CURRENT SITUATION WHICH ALIGNS CHURCH "ON THE SIDE OF
THE OPPRESSED" AND STRONGLY DENOUNCES POLICE BRUTALITY AND
"COLD-BLOODED TORTURE" OF DETAINED PERSONS. LATTER CHARGE
DREW SHARP AND IMMEDIATE RESPONSE FROM COMMISSIONER OF
POLICE WHO DENIED KNOWLEDGE OF SUCH ACTIONS, WARNED THAT
BISHOPS MUST GIVE EVIDENCE TO SUPPORT CHARGES AND THREATENED
POSSIBLE PROSECUTION IF THEY REFUSED. BISHOPS HAVE RESPOND-
ED THAT THEY WILL GIVE EVIDENCE ONLY IF WITNESSES HAVE 100
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PAGE 02 CAPE T 00225 01 OF 02 151540Z

PER CENT GUARANTEE OF PROTECTION AGAINST POLICE MISTREAT-
MENT. AT TIME WHEN BOTH SIDES APPEAR TO BE SEEKING COM-
PROMISE ON INTEGRATION OF CHURCH SCHOLLS, STAGE IS SET FOR
ANOTHER POSSIBLE CHRUCH-STATE CONFRONTATION WHICH BY ITS
VERY NATURE SEEMS LIKELY TO GENERATE CONSIDERABLE CON-
TROVERSY. END SUMMARY

1. S.A. CATHOLIC BISHOPS ISSUED THEIR STATEMENTS AT END OF CONFERENCE IN PRETORIA FEB. 2-9. STATEMENT ON CONSCIENTIOUS OBJECTORS UPHELD RIGHT TO REFUSE MILITARY SERVICE ON RELIGIOUS GROUNDS, DEFINED DIFFERENT CATEGORIES THEREOF AND CALLED FOR LEGISLATION TO ESTABLISH NON-MILITARY NATIONAL SERVICE (I.E., SOCIAL SERVICE) AS A POSSIBLE ALTERNATIVE AND TO MAKE ELECTION OF NON-COMBATANT SERVICE (E.G., MEDICAL CORPS) AVAILABLE TO ADDITIONAL CATEGORIES OF OBJECTORS.

2. IN DECLARATION OF COMMITMENT, BISHOPS SAID THEY WOULD "URGENTLY INVESTIGATE" SETTING UP A CONSULTATIVE LAY GROUP REFLECTING THE CHURCH'S MEMBERSHIP RATIO (80 PERCENT BLACK - 20 PERCENT WHITE) TO WORK WITH BISHOPS IN DETERMINING CHURCH POLICY. THEY PLEDGED TO PROVIDE TRAINING AND SPEED UP PROMOTION OF BLACKS IN CHURCH HIERARCHY AND TO STUDY SHARING OF CHURCH FINANCES. DECLARATION ALSO ENUMERATED AN ANTI-RACISM PROGRAM WHICH WILL, "INTER ALIA": PUCH AHEAD WITH INTEGRATION OF ALL CHURCH INSTITUTIONS (HOSPITALS, HOMES FOR ELDERLY, ETC.); GIVE SPECIAL ATTENTION TO GROWING NUMBER OF UNEMPLOYED, ESPECIALLY MIGRANT WORKERS, TO WORKER ORGANIZATIONS, SQUATTERS, POLITICAL PRISONERS AND BANNED AND DETAINED PERSONS; SIGNIFY THE BREAKING AWAY BY THE CHURCH FROM THE PREVAILING SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC SYSTEMS BY APPOINTING BLACK PRIESTS TO WHITE PARISHES.

3. STATEMENT ON CURRENT SITUATION REITERATED THE CAUSES OF BLACK FRUSTRATION WHICH LED TO SOWETO RIOTS AND AFTERMATH, ASSERTED THAT THE PEOPLE WOULD NOT REST UNTIL PROPER BALANCE OF JUSTICE ACHIEVED AND AFFIRMED THAT "IN THIS WE ARE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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PAGE 03 CAPE T 00225 01 OF 02 151540Z

ON THE SIDE OF THE OPPRESSED." BISHOPS DECLARED THEY ESPECIALLY DISTURBED BY "WHAT APPEARS TO BE RELIABLE REPORTS OF POLICE BRUTALITY" IN EVENTS SINCE JUNE '76 RIOTS. STATEMENT ACKNOWLEDGED THAT SITUATION OF VIOLENCE BREEDS ATROCITIES ON BOTH SIDES BUT "WE ARE SPEAKING OF SEEMINGLY SYSTEMATIC BEATINGS AND UNJUSTIFIABLE SHOOTINGS DURING DISTURBANCES AND OF COLD-BLOODED TORTURE OF DETAINED PERSONS." STATEMENT CALLED FOR INVESTIGATION, PROTESTED INTENDED PROVISIONS OF LEGAL INDEMNITY (CAPE TOWN 125) FOR POLICE AND OTHERS "WHO MAY HAVE BEEN GUILTY OF UNPROVOKED AND DISPROPORTIONATE VIOLENCE" AND CONCLUDED THAT BLACK PEOPLE HAVE REACHED "POINT OF NO RETURN." TEMPORARY SUPPRESSION BY VIOLENCE COULD NOT PREVENT HORRORS OF FUTURE CIVIL WAR. ONLY JUST SHARING OF CITIZENSHIP WOULD SUFFICE.

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PAGE 01 CAPE T 00225 02 OF 02 151550Z

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LIMITED OFFICIAL USE SECTION 2 OF 2 CAPE TOWN 0225

4. POLICE COMMISSIONER PRINSLOO RESPONDED SHARPLY, SAYING HE HAD NO RPT NO KNOWLEDGE OF TORTURE OR ILLEGAL ACTIONS BY POLICE. HE WOULD DEMAND EVIDENCE AND INVESTIGATE. WARINING THAT YOU CAN'T HIDE INFORMATION OF CRIME "BEHIND YOUR CLERICAL COAT," PRINSLOO, IN THINLY-VEILED THREAT, SAID IF BISHOPS REFUSED TO GIVE EVIDENCE "THERE IS A REMEDY IN LAW." MIN. JUSTICE KRUGER MADE SIMILAR DENIAL AND DEMAND FOR EVIDENCE IN TV INTERVIEW FEB. 11. SECRETARY OF THE BISHOPS CONFERENCE, FATHER SCHOLTEN, ANNOUNCED THAT HE HAD BEEN VISITED TWICE FEB. 11 BY SENIOR POLICE OFFICIALS DEMANDING EVIDENCE. HE HAD INDICATED THEY WOULD HAVE TO SEEK IT FROM THE BISHOPS. IN STATEMENT TO PRESS, FATHER SCHOLTEN SAID BISHOPS WILL REVEAL "OVERWHELMING EVIDENCE" OF POLICE BRUTALITY NOW IN THEIR POSSESSION ONLY IF WITNESSES ARE GIVEN "100 PERCENT GUARANTEE" OF PROTECTION. HE SAID WITNESSES TO SOME OF THE INCIDENTS ARE BEING HARASSED BY SECURITY POLICE AND "WE WANT TO PROTECT THEM AS FAR AS WE CAN." FATHER SCHOLTEN EXPRESSED AMAZEMENT THAT KRUGER AND PRINSLOO SHOULD CLAIM TO BE UNAWARE OF INCIDENTS. HE NOTED THAT

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PAGE 02 CAPE T 00225 02 OF 02 151550Z

PRINSLOO DID NOT SAY THERE ARE NO CASES OF POLICE BRUTALITY, ONLY THAT "HE KNOWS OF NONE." LATER UNCONFIRMED REPORTS SAID THA THE SOUTH AFRICAN COUNCIL OF

CHRUCHES, WITH SUPPORT OF THE CATHOLIC BISHOPS
CONFERENCE, IS EXPLORING POSSIBILITY OF ASKING A
RETIRED JUDGE AND A TOP CHURCHAMAN TO "SIFT" THE ALLEGA-
TIONS OF POLICE BRUTALITY.

5. COMMENT: CHARGES OF EXCESSIVE POLICE
VIOLENCE WERE AIRED EARLIER THIS YEAR BY BLACK MINISTERS
IN CAPE TOWN (CAPE TOWN A-10, FEB. 8) AND TORTURE
ALLEGATIONS HAVE BEEN CIRCULATING PRIVATELY FOR SOME
TIME (REFAIR). INDICTMENT OF POLICE ON BOTH COUNTS BY
CATHOLIC BISHOPS HAS DRAMATIZED THE ISSUE OF POLICE
BEHAVIOUR CONSIDERABLY. DEGREE OF SAG SENSITIVITY ON
SUBJECT ILLUSTRATED BY TOUGH RESPONSES OF BOTH PRINSLOO
AND KRUGER. POLICE WILL ALMSOT CERTAINLY MAKE VIGOR-
OUS EFFORT TO DISCREDIT THE CHARGES. HAVING ONLY
RECENTLY FACED NECESSITY OF SEEKING COMPROMISE WITH
THE CHURCH ON SCHOOL INTEGRATION PROBLEM (CAPE TOWN 0222),
WHICH NO RPT NOT YET RESOLVED, SAG NOW FACES ANOTHER
"CONFRONTATION" OVER HIGHLY EMOTIONAL ISSUE. THIS ISSUE
MAY HAVE EVEN MORE EXPLOSIVE REPERCUSSIONS THEN SCHOOL
QUESTION. HOW SAG REACTS MAY PROVIDE FURTHER INSIGHTS
TO ITS TOLERANCE THRESHHOLD FOR DIRECT CHALLENGES OF
THIS SORT. TEXT OF STATMENTS ADOPTED AT BISHOPS CONFERENCE
BEING POUCHED.
BOWDLER

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Message Attributes

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